



Amendments to the Claims:

1 1. (Currently Amended) A fluid bearing base ~~and~~
2 ~~workstation apparatus~~ for facilitating movement of a heavy
3 load such as a workbench, cabinet or equipment, ~~the apparatus~~
4 comprising:

5
6 a) ~~a base comprising~~ a substantially planar
7 backplate;

8 b) a retractable, inflatable, substantially unitary
9 membrane ~~connected to said backplate to form a plurality~~
10 ~~of fluid bearings; and~~

11 c) means for coupling said base to a source of
12 ~~providing~~ pressurized fluid to inflate said membrane
13 [[.]]; and

14
15 d) a bonding layer comprising an adhesive film
16 attached to said membrane and to said backplate at
17 predetermined locations, providing for fluid passage
18 therebetween.

1 2. (Canceled)

1 3. (Canceled)

1 4. (Currently Amended) The fluid bearing base ~~and~~
2 ~~workstation apparatus~~ in accordance with claim 1, further
3 comprising a stencil and dimple assembly ~~connected through~~
4 bearing against the side of said membrane remote from said
5 backplate to form a plurality of fluid bearings ~~and to said~~
6 ~~base for protecting said membrane and for distributing said~~
7 ~~load.~~

1 5. (Currently Amended) The fluid bearing base ~~and~~
2 ~~workstation apparatus~~ in accordance with ~~claim 3~~ claim 1,
3 wherein said means for coupling connects said base to provide
4 a source of pressurized fluid ~~comprises~~ comprising one of the
5 group: a blower, compressor, and pump.

1 6. (Canceled)

1 7. (Currently Amended) The fluid bearing base ~~and~~
2 ~~workstation apparatus~~ in accordance with claim 1, ~~wherein said~~
3 ~~apparatus~~ further ~~comprises~~ comprising fluid distribution
4 means operatively connected to said backplate and to each of

5 said plurality of fluid bearings for providing pressurized
6 fluid thereto.

1 8. (Currently Amended) The fluid bearing base ~~and~~
2 ~~workstation apparatus~~ in accordance with claim 7, wherein said
3 fluid distribution means comprises a backplate manifold.

1 9. (Currently Amended) The fluid bearing base ~~and~~
2 ~~workstation apparatus~~ in accordance with claim 8, further
3 comprising fluid flow control means operatively connected to
4 said backplate manifold.

1 10. (Currently Amended) The fluid bearing base ~~and~~
2 ~~workstation apparatus~~ in accordance with claim 7, wherein said
3 plurality of fluid bearings forms a grid thereof.

1 11. (Currently Amended) The fluid bearing base ~~and~~
2 ~~workstation apparatus~~ in accordance with ~~claim 1~~ claim 5,
3 wherein said source of ~~means for providing~~ pressurized fluid
4 is selected from the group: an on-board pressurized fluid
5 tank, an on-board blower, an on-board compressor, an external
6 compressor, an external pressurized fluid source, and an
7 external pump.

1 12. (Currently Amended) The fluid bearing base ~~and~~
2 ~~workstation apparatus~~ in accordance with claim 1, wherein said
3 fluid is selected from one of the group: gas, air, compressed
4 air, water and oil.

1 13. (Currently Amended) The fluid bearing base ~~and~~
2 ~~workstation apparatus~~ in accordance with claim 1, further
3 comprising:

4 a) a component selected from the group: workbench,
5 cabinet and equipment, said component being supported by
6 and attached to said base.

1 14. (Canceled)

1 15. (Canceled).

1 16. (Canceled)

1 17. (Canceled)

1 18. (Canceled)

1 19. (Canceled)

1 20. (Canceled)

2
1 21. (New) In a multiple fluid bearing apparatus for
2 facilitating movement of a heavy workbench,
3 cabinet or equipment along a floor or similar
4 support surface, said apparatus having a
5 retractable, inflatable, substantially unitary
6 membrane, the improvement comprising a stencil
7 assembly for forming multiple fluid bearings from
8 said membrane.

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2 22. (New) The apparatus of claim 21 wherein said
3 stencil assembly comprises a stencil layer, and a
4 backplate layer on opposed sides of said membrane
5 for forming said membrane into a plurality of
6 fluid bearings.

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2 23. (New) The apparatus of claim 22 wherein said
3 stencil layer has multiple apertures for defining
4 multiple fluid bearings in said membrane, and
5 wherein said stencil assembly further includes
6 dimple means on the same side of the membrane as
7 the stencil layer and within said apertures for

8 holding the membrane away from said floor or
9 similar support surface on which the apparatus
10 rests.

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2 24. (New) The apparatus of claim 23 wherein said
3 backplate layer comprises the existing bottom
4 surface of said workbench, cabinet or equipment.

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1 25. (New) The apparatus of claim 23 wherein the
2 backplate layer is sufficiently strong to bear
3 the distributed load of the workbench, cabinet or
4 equipment and includes grooved passages of
5 substantially equal length and cross-sectional
6 area to distribute pressurized air to said
7 bearings, said stencil resting on the floor when
8 the bearings are not inflated.

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2 26. (New) The apparatus of claim 23 wherein said
3 stencil assembly further includes an airtight
4 bonding layer for selectively sealing portions of
5 the membrane to the backplate layer to define
6 said bearings.

1 27. (New) The apparatus of claim 26 further
2 including multiple fasteners for securing the
3 stencil layer to the backplate layer.

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2 28. (New) A multiple air bearing base for moving
3 heavy loads, such as a workbench, a cabinet or
4 equipment comprising:

5
6 a) an inflatable, retractable, substantially
7 unitary membrane layer;

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9 b) a layered stencil assembly for forming said
10 membrane layer into multiple fluid bearings; and

11
12 c) a manifold layer for dividing a source of
13 pressurized air into multiple equal air streams
14 for each bearing.

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2 29 (New) The base of claim 28 wherein the
3 manifold layer includes a splitter and channels
4 formed in said manifold layer to divide the
5 incoming air to each bearing independent of
6 pressure drops downstream of the splitter.

1 30. (New) The base of claim 29 wherein the channels
2 are formed in the manifold layer and are of
3 substantially equal length and cross-sectional
4 area.